

Iran *J* *apd*

EPIS 26

SHAH WANTS REMOVAL OF U.S., SOVIET MILITARY PRESENCE FROM GULF

LD258280 LONDON THE OBSERVER IN ENGLISH 4 MAY 75 P 6 LD

(GAVIN YOUNG DISPATCH FROM TEHRAN: "SHAH WANTS BIG POWERS OUT OF GULF")

(TEXT) THE SHAH OF IRAN, UP TO NOW AMERICA'S STRONGEST ALLY IN THE OIL LANDS OF THE GULF, WANTS ANY AMERICAN MILITARY PRESENCE REMOVED FROM THE AREA. THIS INCLUDES ANY AMERICAN NAVAL, AIR OR MILITARY FACILITY IN BAHRAIN.

AT THE SAME TIME, THE SHAH TOLD ME THAT HE EXPECTED HIS NEW ALLY, IRAQ--GENERALLY, THOUGH WRONGLY, CONSIDERED BY AMERICAN MIDDLE EAST EXPERTS AS A SOVIET 'SLAVE'--TO AGREE TO SIMILAR EXCLUSION OF SOVIET BASES IN THE GULF.

THIS COOPERATION IN AN UNPRECEDENTED COMING TOGETHER OF IRAN AND IRAQ, THE MOST IMPORTANT MILITARY STATES IN THE MOST IMPORTANT OIL REGION OF THE WORLD, WAS CEMENTED DURING THE VISIT TO TEHRAN LAST WEEK OF IRAQ'S STRONG MAN, SADDAM HUSAYN. IF IRAN AND IRAQ'S NEW FRIENDSHIP HOLDS, THE FACE OF THE MIDDLE EAST COULD BE CHANGED.

IN HIS HILLSIDE PALACE OUTSIDE TEHRAN, THE SHAH SITS BOLT UPRIGHT IN A LARGE OFFICE SHIMMERING WITH ANGLED MIRRORS, A SMALL, SLIM, DAPPER MAN IN HIS FIFTIES. HIS VOICE IS SOFT; HE SELDOM GESTURES. HE ANSWERED QUESTIONS ABOUT POSSIBLE POINTS OF DISPUTE BETWEEN IRAN AND IRAQ BRIEFLY AND TO THE POINT.

IRAQ'S CLAIM ON KUWAIT? "KUWAIT CAN BE THE FINLAND OF THE AREA."

THE OMANI WAR THAT INVOLVES IRANIAN TROOPS (AND THE BRITISH) AGAINST LEFT-WING ARAB GUERRILLAS PARTLY SUPPORTED BY IRAQ? "WE DIDN'T EVEN MENTION THAT. LOCAL DIFFERENCE CAN BE SOLVED BETWEEN THE GULF STATES THEMSELVES."

TALKING ABOUT THE SUPER-POWERS' PRESENCE IN THE GULF, THE SHAH SAID TO ME: "WE BOTH WANT TO KEEP THIRD PARTIES OUT."

HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT HE WOULD FAVOR SOME SORT OF COUNCIL, OR CONFERENCE, OF GULF STATES TO COPE WITH LOCAL PROBLEMS OF WHATEVER KIND. "BUT," HE ADDED, "I WOULD RATHER THE SUGGESTION CAME FROM SOMEONE ELSE."

IT WILL PROBABLY COME FROM SADDAM HUSAYN, WHO IS THE EFFECTIVE LEADER OF BA'ATH SOCIALIST IRAQ AND ITS VICE-PRESIDENT.

AT ANY RATE THERE IS NO DOUBT OF THE INTENSIFY OF THE IRANIAN FEELING THAT SUPER-POWERS FROM EAST OR WEST ARE A MENACE IN THE AREA. IMMEDIATELY AFTER MY TALK WITH THE SHAH, HIS PRIME MINISTER, MR HOVEYDA, IN ANOTHER PLACE IN TEHRAN, WAVED HIS PIPE-STEM AT ME, SAYING: "WE SHOULDN'T HAVE THIRD PARTIES COMING IN."

AND THE POINT ABOUT THE BACES WAS STRESSED YET AGAIN
IN A C...
MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR, WHOSE HAWK-LIKE FACE IS TO BE SEEN AT THE
SHAH'S SIDE AT GATHERINGS OF THE OIL-PRODUCING COUNTRIES' 'UNION'--
OPEC. HE SAID: 'HIS MAJESTY WANTS ALL BACES REMOVED.'

THE SHAH HIMSELF FEELS THAT HE IS A SORT OF GENDARME OF THE GULF
AREA. NOW HE IS FORGING THIS VEER JUST BEFORE SADDAM HUSAYN
ARRIVED AND JUST AFTER PRESIDENT AS-SADAT OF EGYPT AND PRESIDENT
DAUD OF AFGHANISTAN HAD LEFT.

THIS DOES NOT MEAN THE SHAH IS TURNING ANTI-AMERICAN. HE IS EVEN
NOW AWAITING THE DELIVERY OF 80 GRUMMAN TOMCATS;
141 TIGER FF-5 FIGHTERS ARE EXPECTED AS WELL.

IT IS SIMPLY THAT THE SHAH IS PRO-IRAN AND FAVORS A QUIET TIME
IN THE AREA. HE HAS REITERATED TO BOTH KING KHALID AND SADDAM
HUSAYN THAT HE AGREES WITH THEM THAT ISRAEL MUST WITHDRAW FROM
OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES, INCLUDING JERUSALEM.

THE SHAH, WHO THESE DAYS IS MOVING ABOUT THE MIDDLE EASTERN
WORLD LIKE A REGAL, CONFIDENT AND POWERFUL KERRY KISSINGER, IS
OBVIOUSLY INTENT ON EMBRACING EVEN SOCIALIST ARABS. HE WANTS TO
DEFUSE THE GULF REGION WHERE, IT IS NOT TOO DRAMATIC TO SAY, AN
EAST-WEST WAR COULD SUDDENLY FLASH INTO LIFE.

THIS DANGER OF WAR STEMS FROM THE BIZARELY MASSIVE ARMS
BUILD-UP THAT AMERICA SET IN TRAIN A FEW YEARS AGO BY CRAMMING
BILLIONS OF DOLLARS-WORTH OF THE MOST MODERN WEAPONRY INTO IRAN
AND THE BACKWARD EMIRATES OF THE ARAB SIDE OF THE GULF, THUS RISKING
A VIOLENT FLARE-UP WITH SOVIET-ARMED AND SOCIALIST--THOUGH NOT
COMMUNIST--IRAQ. IT LIES ALSO IN THE NEAR CERTAINTY THAT, IN THE
NEXT ARAB-ISRAELI WAR (WHICH MANY SEE AS INEVITABLE), THE ARAB
STATES WILL CUT OFF AMERICA'S OIL AGAIN. THERE HAVE BEEN GROWLS
FROM WASHINGTON THAT IF THIS HAPPENS THE U.S. MARINES MIGHT BE
LANDED TO GRAB THE OIL WELLS.

TO THIS SORT OF SABRE-RATTILING, MR HOVEYDA, THE SHAH'S PRIME
MINISTER (AND THEREFORE ABOUT AS FAR REMOVED FROM EXTREME LEFT-WING,
ANTI-WEST THOUGHT AS CAN BE IMAGINED), HAD A VERY FORTHRIGHT REPLY.
HIS SMILE LEFT HIS FACE, HE SAT UP IN HIS CHAIR AND AGAIN THE PIPE
POINTED AT ME LIKE A MINIATURE PISTOL. 'I DON'T TAKE ANY NOTICE OF
SUCH RUBBISH. CAN YOU IMAGE IT?' HE SAID. 'WHICH OIL WELLS WILL
THOSE MARINES GRAB? WHERE? HOW MANY MILLIONS OF SOLDIERS
WILL IT TAKE? AND ALL THAT AFTER VIETNAM....?'

THUS, LOOSE TALK OF LANDING THE MARINES ALSO EMBARRASSES AND,
POSSIBLY, LOSES FRIENDS AND ALLIES LIKE THE SHAH AND THE
WEST-LEANING GULF RULERS. AND THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THE
SHAH--WHATEVER ONE MAY THINK OF HIS DOMESTIC POLICIES--HAS EMERGED,
ON THE MIDDLE EAST PLANE, A DISTINCT REALIST.

5 MAY 1631Z DD/SFE